

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 4-25 are amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration based on the amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. §112 Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 4-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph; and rejects claims 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are amended responsive to the rejections. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 16, 18, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Wood (U.S. Patent No. 6,023,263); rejects claims 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Wood in view of Blake et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0232510); rejects claims 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Wood in view of Blake; rejects claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Wood in view of Mashitani et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0089212); and rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Wood in view of Blake and further in view of Mishitani. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that the applied references, either individually or in combination, teach or render obvious each and every feature of the claims. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Applicant's claimed combination of features provides extracting left and right target regions that do not include a pair of fused points corresponding to each other in the left image and the right image and identifying a more inconspicuous region between the left and right target regions; and carrying out processing of generating a stereoscopic image

set of images so as to make the region identified in the region extraction step even more inconspicuous than the remaining regions of the target regions.

With reference to Figure 3A of the present application, in order to overcome "binocular rivalry," the presently claimed combination of features uses the principle that when the front subject (subject A) is seen out of focus, and when the back subject (subject B) which is concealed by the front subject (subject A) when looked at with a "right eye," is visibly sharper than the front subject (subject A), the observer does not look at the front subject (subject A) intentionally. Specifically, referring to Figure 5A, because the focus is adjusted on the point bL on the subject BL in the left image 360, the point bL and subject BL are sharp. In the right image 361, although the lower half of the subject BR and point bR (not shown) are invisible because of the concealment by the subject AR, because the point and region corresponding to them are visible in the left image 360, the region in the left image 360 is referred to as a region Y1 (represented by hatching of broken lines). The region is present only in the left image 360, and not in the right image 361. There is a portion of the subject AR at region X1 corresponding to Y1. Accordingly, those are left and right regions that can bring about the binocular rivalry "target regions" of the presently claimed combination of features. Assume that the point bL and its periphery constitute the region Y1 (represented by hatching of broken lines, i.e. "left target region" of the presently claimed combination of features), and the point aR and its periphery constitute a region X1 (represented by hatching of solid lines, i.e. "right target region" of the presently claimed combination of features). Then, because the region X1 in the right image 361 is more inconspicuous than the region Y1 when employing the two images 360 and 361 as binocular parallax stereoscopic images for the stereoscopic vision, considering the contents of the images, the region X1 is a region that is not looked at by the observer intentionally (i.e. "the

region identified in the region extraction step" of claim 1) and becomes a region to be even more inconspicuous.

According to the presently claimed combination of features, "binocular rivalry" is overcome because a more inconspicuous region (X1: region identified in the region extraction step) is made even more inconspicuous by employing the above principle. Accordingly, it is clear that Wood neither discloses nor would have rendered obvious the presently claimed combination of features.

Additionally, the Office Action asserts that Wood teaches both extracting elements and generating an image set of images while making the extraction region more inconspicuous because Wood discloses "the filled gaps... as such are unobtrusive." The "filled gaps," however, may be accidentally or consequently unobtrusive but Wood never discloses that the gaps should be or are directed to being made unobtrusive when being filled. First, Wood discloses filling the gaps but never discloses making a (more inconspicuous) portion or region included in an image set (even) more inconspicuous. Accordingly, Wood neither discloses nor suggests both extracting a more inconspicuous region as a processed region and generating a stereoscopic image set of images so as to make more inconspicuous the processed region extracted than the target regions except for the processed region.

Further, the Office Action asserts that Wood is directed to combating binocular rivalry caused by stereoscopic vision. "Binocular rivalry," however, is a problem that occurs when many regions that are not mixed through the left and right eyes are perceived, as a result, different visual images with the two eyes are perceived and the brain perceives disturbed, wavering images because of using images such as photographic images that achieve focus in a wide range as the images for the stereoscopic vision in particular (paragraph [0006] of the present application). Wood neither discloses nor suggests that the above-mentioned binocular rivalry as indicated in the present application is caused by stereoscopic vision. Wood may be

aimed at dealing with general problems caused by stereoscopic vision, but is never aimed at dealing with the binocular rivalry caused by the stereoscopic vision that the presently claimed combination of features is aimed at remedying.

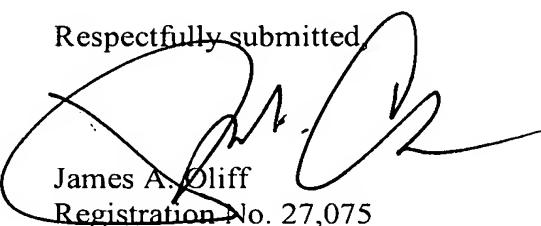
Furthermore, the Office Action asserts that Wood teaches a post-processing so that the image may be unobtrusive to the user. Although Wood discloses "the filled gaps... and as such are unobtrusive," "the filled gaps" are accidentally or consequently unobtrusive as mentioned above. First, the presently claimed combination of features does not recite "the image may be unobtrusive to the user." Specifically, Wood discloses creating two lost outside views based on the image sources for the two center views of four sources in post-processing. More specifically, although Wood fills the gaps with an image created in post-processing, the image (the nearest occluded pixel information) is preferably obtrusive because the created image is too unnatural or artificial for viewing. Filled gaps, however, are not obtrusive because a target part is *per se* made more inconspicuous. If the target part had to be made more inconspicuous in Wood, the two center views that are not created in post-processing would be obtrusive. On the contrary, the presently claimed combination of features makes the target region that is not created in post-processing more *inconspicuous*.

Accordingly, Wood fails to teach and would not have rendered obvious each feature and combination of the independent claims. Neither Blake nor Mashitani remedy the deficiencies therein. Thus, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under §102 and §103 is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination

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